

Tape 308

Beth Collett Sweatfield

Interviewed on October 12, 2001

Transcribed by Lori G. Robinson, February 22, 2002

The following is an interview conducted by Kathleen Irving.

Kathleen Irving (KI): This is Kathi Irving. I'm with Beth Sweatfield at her home at 364 South 200 West in Vernal. Today is October 12, 2001. Beth, can you tell me what your full name is, the names of your parents, and your birth date, please?

Beth Sweatfield: My full name is Beth Collett Sweatfield, and I was born June 11, 1923. My father was Wiley S. Collett, and my mother was Irma Billings Collett.

KI: Were they from here?

Beth: Yes. They were both from this area.

KI: But you were born in...

Beth: In Wyoming and raised there.

KI: Your father was working there?

Beth: Well, he bought a ranch there, ranches. He moved around a lot.

KI: So you grew up on a ranch yourself, then.

Beth: Yes.

KI: What did you like about that kind of life?

Beth: Well, it was a good childhood. We had animals and the ranches were beautiful, in alpine areas, you know, with springs and creeks, and it was good. My first recollections were at Birch Creek, which is on the other side of this mountain, but it was in Utah, in Daggett County, Utah.

KI: How many brothers and sisters did you have?

Beth: I had two brothers, one died as a small child, and then I had four sisters.

KI: Lots of friends to play with as you were growing up, just among your siblings, then.

Beth: Yeah. Well, in the ranches, you know, we were kind of isolated, but you always had

neighbors and school friends and things like that. And my sisters.

KI: That sounds like fun.

Beth: And they're still my best friends.

KI: That's good. Is this a picture of you, right here? Are those your sisters?

Beth: Yes. That was on my sister's, just older than I, eightieth birthday.

KI: Oh. Just recently?

Beth: Yes, just recently.

KI: Well, it's really fun to have that. How old were you when you decided you wanted to be a nurse?

Beth: Well, I think I decided when I was in high school. My family was all schoolteachers, and I decided to be something different, and I ended up in nursing.

KI: So you graduated from high school where?

Beth: In Mountain View, Wyoming.

KI: Then you went to Ogden, didn't you, to go to nursing school?

Beth: Yes. But I went to the University of Wyoming first, and then the war broke out.

KI: Second World War?

Beth: Yes. And my sister, who was financing me, she was teaching school, the one that I just told you about that had her eightieth birthday, she was teaching school, and she decided to get married. So that kind of cut my finances off. Of course, the war had started, and so, I went to Ogden at the McKay-Dee Memorial Hospital.

KI: Was it already called the McKay-Dee Hospital, at the time?

Beth: It was called the Dee Memorial Hospital then.

KI: How long did you go to school and which university did you attend?

Beth: Well, I went there first, and then when we went into training, we went to Weber, but we affiliated with the University of Utah. So, actually, I'm a graduate of the University of Utah.

KI: Oh, I see. Were you in Wyoming for one year going to school, or two?

Beth: No, just one quarter when the war broke out.

KI: And then you came here?

Beth: Yes.

KI: So, the war broke out in 1941.

Beth: Yeah, and that was about the end of the quarter.

KI: What kind of nursing did you do?

Beth: Well, as a student nurse, of course, you do everything. During the war, it was a really busy time because they took a lot of the nurses, you know, and so the hospital depended pretty much on the student nurses.

KI: Did they ever try to get you to go into the military, to become a nurse there?

Beth: Well, a lot of us joined what they call the Nurse Cadets, and that's kind of equivalent, now, that med students [do], and then you do government service afterwards now. They issued us uniforms, but we didn't wear them very often, only to go to the movies because you could get in cheaper! They were kind of gross. But, they paid us five dollars a month, and we were paid every three months. That was when you were a beginner, and then when you got to be a junior, they paid you ten dollars a month. Then when you were a senior, they paid you fifteen dollars a month.

KI: The whole time you were in training were war years, weren't they?

Beth: Yep. I graduated in '45, when the war ended, so I was in training most of the war. I and Lavonne White had signed up to go to Hawaii. You had to either go military, public health, or something, if you signed up with the cadets. It wasn't compulsory. Anyhow, we were all signed up to go when the war ended. And then, that's when I came out here.

William Henderson, he was on the hospital board here, and he wrote me a letter and wanted me to come here. In the meantime, my folks had moved back here, from Wyoming. He wanted me to come here for a couple of months and give the nurses a vacation because, right at that time, that was when the oil boom was here, and they were really busy, and they only had about three graduate nurses here then. So I came, and I've been here ever since.

KI: Were you single, then, when you moved out here?

Beth: Yes.

KI: You hadn't met your husband yet?

Beth: No. As a matter of fact, I met him in the old hospital that's over at the Episcopal church now. Larry Thorne was keeping the books for the hospital at that time, and my husband had gotten out of the service. I came here in September of 1945, and he got out in November in '45, and I met him then. Larry introduced me to him. They were friends.

KI: Did your husband grow up here then?

Beth: Yes.

KI: Is Larry [Rhoda DeVed's] older brother?

Beth: Younger brother, only brother, yes.

KI: She has an older sister, doesn't she?

Beth: Yes, and she has passed away.

KI: Thank you. When you were being a nurse cadet, did the government pay for your schooling?

Beth: No.

KI: You still had to pay for it?

Beth: Well, we paid the original fee. I can remember my dad sold two cows and paid the two hundred dollars that would get you in. Then we worked eight-hour shifts and went to school from four to six hours a day. And that was six days a week.

KI: Did they keep you all in a dorm together?

Beth: Yes, and we got our meals. We had a dormitory. At that time, I think, there were about ninety-one students.

KI: All women?

Beth: Yes. No men.

KI: Men were never nurses at that time, were they?

Beth: Not at that time. Actually, it was really quite militaristic, though. Back then, you didn't walk in front of a senior, and you let seniors and doctors and everybody go in the elevator if you were a "probie."

You had a probation period of six months, you either made it or you didn't. I went in in the midterm because of the war, and in the class of twenty-six, there were seven of us that graduated.

KI: Pretty low numbers, then.

Beth: It was quite hard. It really was. You were real restricted. You had to be in by nine o'clock and lights out at ten, so it was quite disciplined.

KI: If the war had not been going on, would the training have been different, or would you still have spent those eight-hour days working?

Beth: No, it wouldn't. It wouldn't have been too much different because the ones that were ahead of us had done the same thing.

KI: Did you work in every phase of nursing in the hospital when you were there?

Beth: Yes. You had to spend so much time in each section, like pediatrics and surgery, med-surg, on the surgical floor and medical floor. Then, at that time, we affiliated our psychiatry at Bushnell Hospital, military.

KI: Where was that?

Beth: That was in Brigham City. I don't know why it was called Bushnell. I know that we had the soldiers flown in that had just barely been cleaned up, you know, from the war. It was orthopedic and mental.

KI: I imagine there were a lot of mental problems from being in the war.

Beth: Yes. They were very sad, those young men.

KI: So, you'd go up there to work, too?

Beth: Yeah. We had to spend, if I remember right, it was three months there.

KI: Did you ever want to specialize in one of those areas, then, when you graduated?

Beth: Well, not really. I come out here and stayed ever since, and here you did everything.

KI: Not much other choice.

Beth: No.

KI: William Henderson was on the board at the time you came out?

Beth: Yes.

KI: Wasn't he a mayor at one time, too?

Beth: I'm sure he was.

KI: What doctors were here when you first came?

Beth: When I came, there were only two. There was Dr. Hansen, and I can't remember his first name, but I'm sure that it's known [Joseph], and Dr. Farley Eskelson. Then, Dr. [J. Marion] Francke had a few patients, but he was quite elderly at this time.

KI: Would you describe the county hospital in the Episcopal parish house?

Beth: Well, it was sure a culture shock to come here. We were very busy. When we did surgery, we did the instruments in a pressure cooker, and if you had an emergency and they were cooking, they just had to move it back and let you do your instruments. The only type of X-ray there was, Dr. Eskelson had, I really think it was a veterinarian X-ray, in a suitcase, and the only thing that it would take would be long bones.

KI: That's really interesting. What did the inside of the hospital look like?

Beth: Well, there was a kitchen on the northeast corner. Then, the surgery and the labor room was all one thing, and it was on the northwest corner. Downstairs, on the east side, there was a linen room and the doctors' dressing room. We even had incubator babies in that room. Then there was, I assume, either an old linen closet or a pantry, and it had shelves up. That was our nursery. We'd put the babies in baskets and put them on the shelves. It wasn't more than about six foot wide. We had them on both sides. Then there was one bathroom downstairs, and the maternity ward was on the east side.

KI: That was downstairs?

Beth: Downstairs, yes. The maternity kind of spilled over on the west side, and it seems like we had about three or four beds in each side downstairs. Then, I assume it had been the porch, had been closed in, and that was the entrance and the office. Upstairs they had a big long ramp.

KI: That was so steep.

Beth: It really was. I haven't been over there in a long time. I'd like to go back over there some time. But anyway, it was so steep. Upstairs we had two private rooms, and then there was, I assume it must have been an old bedroom, it was quite large, and we had two patients in there. Over the porch we had, I think, maybe four more beds there, and there was one private room. Then, a utility/bathroom combination was what it was.

KI: Did the patients have to just get up and walk down the hall to the bathroom?

Beth: Yes, well, if you let them up. I can remember, there was a big hopper in it that we used. Mostly all bedpans for the patients. Back then you didn't let patients up much.

KI: I was going to ask that. How long did you keep mothers in the hospital?

Beth: Well, in my training days, we kept them almost two weeks. Then, it seemed like about ten days or so, in the hospital, here. I can remember, the first day I came, it was a man from Lapoint, came in, and he had a ruptured bowel and Dr. Hansen operated. I scrubbed in and helped Dr. Hansen, and Dr. Eskelson gave the anesthetic.

I can remember, Dr. Hansen was a real serious person. He didn't have much sense of humor. But, anyhow, we found numerous perforations in the bowel, and Dr. Eskelson said, "Should I blow down his mouth and see if any air comes out?" Dr. Hansen didn't think that was a bit funny. But anyhow, we lost the patient.

The next day, a patient came in in really advanced labor and we barely got the doctor there, and we just delivered her without any setup. I can't remember what happened the next day, but it was some kind of accident that was really bad, and I thought, "Oh, boy. I'm packin' my bags." I just wasn't going to stay, but, anyhow, they talked me into it. Actually, they didn't want the nurses to do anything, you know.

There were so many things that I had been used to doing, like IVs and examining pregnant women and that type of thing, and they just didn't allow you to do it here. This was really frustrating. So, I'd have to call the aide and have her tell me when the lady was ready to deliver, which was kind of embarrassing, you know.

Then Dr. [Ray E.] Spendlove came, and that made a big difference. He had come out of the service. He had been in the paratroopers, and he had just come out of the service. I can remember one time some very inebriated men came in. I can't remember all of the circumstances, but I know one of the men was very rude to, I think it was one of the aides, and Dr. Spendlove, you know, told him to back off, and he got a little belligerent, and Dr. Spendlove hit him. And they left.

KI: They just came in because they were just drunk?

Beth: Well, they were with somebody that brought someone into the hospital.

Then Dr. [Tyrrell] Seager came, I'm quite sure, in July of 1946. Of course, he was a surgeon, and they did a lot more things than they had done. Before that they usually sent them to Salt Lake. We got a new autoclave to sterilize the instruments in, and with the two new doctors, then there were a lot of changes.

KI: Dr. Seager told me that the only good thing about the surgery, in that old hospital, was that it had good light. He said that even the table was just a regular examining table.

Beth: Yes, and we used ether. [We were] still using ether anesthetics, even for major surgery. It was amazing. Then we got more instruments, like suction machines and cautery and a lot of things after they came.

KI: Did they allow you to do more things?

Beth: Well, they finally did. That was when I thought, "Well, I just can't stay." So then they let me do exams on the OB's and surgical dressings, and take out stitches, and a lot more things. The

nurses were Mrs. Thorne, Dorothy Thorne—

KI: Is that Leo's wife?

Beth: No. That was Pauline. Dorothy was Bob's wife. He was Robert Coin, and my dad knew him as Coin, but Mrs. Thorne always called him Robert. He was a brother to Leo.

Lucille Hatch was here and Elsie Moffat, she was an older nurse. I think she had left right before I came, and then she came back for a while, later.

KI: They were all regular registered nurses?

Beth: They were registered nurses, yes. Mrs. Thorne, if I remember rightly, she was in the First World War. That's where she met her husband. She was originally from the Chicago area.

KI: What kind of shifts did you work?

Beth: We worked eight-hour shifts, from seven till three, and then from three to eleven, and then eleven to seven.

KI: You would rotate?

Beth: Yes, we'd rotate the shifts. I lived in an apartment, which was up over the Bank of Vernal. Mrs. Thorne and I shared an apartment up there until I was married.

KI: She wasn't married then?

Beth: Mrs. Thorne? Yes, and her husband had a ranch in Jensen, but she lived here. Then, she had one son and he was in the service at the time.

KI: When did you meet your husband?

Beth: I met him in November, 1945, in the old hospital.

KI: When did you marry?

Beth: We were married in March in '47.

KI: Oh, you know, I found your fiftieth wedding anniversary notice from the newspaper today. Boy, did they mess that up!

Beth: Yes! They had my name wrong.

KI: They had both of you as being Collett, huh?

Beth: Yeah, instead of Sweatfield. We got a lot of razzing over that.



KI: I'll bet you did! After you got married, did you continue to nurse?

Beth: Yes.

KI: By that time had they built the new hospital?

Beth: Yes.

KI: Do you remember that?

Beth: Yes, I was on the committee. There was another nurse here at that time, and that was Clayton Simmons' wife, Mary Simmons. There were nurses that kind of came in. We had a lot of transients, you know what I mean, people that were moving around. We had one nurse, and I can't remember her name, but anyhow, she had been in the service, and she was really quite an individual. She worked for quite a little while, and then they insisted on license, and she didn't have one. Come to find out, she had been a medic, or had been in the medical field, in the service.

KI: But only trained just right there?

Beth: Yes.

KI: Never had any real license?

Beth: No. And she really buttered up to the doctors. She was quite an individual.

KI: What happened, then? Did they just have to let her go?

Beth: Yeah. She moved on. Then, let's see, I think her name was Evelyn Myers. They came in here. I know her husband's name was Benny Myers, and I'm not sure about her name, but she came in and she was a very knowledgeable, efficient nurse. She was on the hospital committee when they built the new hospital. We worked together on equipment and stuff like that. Then, the new hospital, if I remember rightly, it was in the fall of '49 that it was built.

In the meantime, I had started to work for the doctors, Dr. Seager and Spendlove and Dr. Eskelson had an office. My first daughter was born in 1950. The hours were better, and the pay was better in the doctors' office, so I worked for them for eleven years. I really enjoyed that. We did tonsillectomies in the doctors' offices.

KI: Were they still using ether?

Beth: Still, yes. We did have a machine, though. It wasn't the drop method, on the mask, you know. In the old hospital, it was just the drop method on the mask, and, actually, the nurses gave the anesthetics for tonsillectomies and for the maternity patients.

KI: You just did a lot of things, then, didn't you?

Beth: And that scares me to death, too, because we had a patient that... They had been out in the mines, and, you know, they have a pressure hose that blows the dust off from 'em. Well, one of the fellows, just a jerk, jokingly put the pressure hose on this fellow, on his rectum, and it just blew his bowel out. He was, oh, terrible sick. Of course, he got peritonitis and was so ill, and they were blood transfusing him.

So, they called me up, from the doctors' office and said, "We have a person here for a blood transfusion. Will you draw the blood and give him the transfusion?" And so I said yes. They did the lab work in the offices, you know. So, this fellow come up, and he said, "I'm here for a transfusion." It was Rulon Bowthorpe, was his name. So, I drew the blood, and I gave it to him, and I just started it on him.

KI: Who did you draw the blood from?

Beth: From this man that came in.

KI: Okay, from another man. It wasn't from the patient?

Beth: No, to give to the patient. So, I drew the blood from him, and, actually, it was his brother. And I drew the patient, and I started the blood, and here come a fella and another man, and he said, "They just sent me from the doctor's office to give blood to Mr. Bowthorpe." Boy, did my heart hit the bottom! So, I called the doctors immediately, and I said, "Well, his brother came up, and I thought that was he that you'd done the lab work on, so I drew the blood, and it's started." And the doctor said, "Well, is he getting any reaction?" I said, "No." He said, "Well, watch him close, and draw the other blood." I watched him close, and he was perfectly all right.

KI: But you didn't know whether the blood was compatible?

Beth: No. Oh, boy, that was really frightening. There was quite a few things like that that happened that really blew my mind.

We had another rancher that came in. Maybe Dr. Seager mentioned this to you. His shoulder would come out of joint all the time, and he was out from the Book Cliffs area, out in Willow Creek, way out there. Well, when they'd get him in, they usually had him so inebriated that he didn't need any anesthetic. Well, Dr. Seager just put his knee in under his arm and pulled quick and the shoulder went back in, and we just put him to bed. He sobered up and was all right.

I can remember one time, I was on the night shift and it was about three o'clock in the morning, and the Wallises, Jack's parents, William Wallis, they were coming back from somewhere, and he come and knocked on the door, and he says, "There's smoke coming out of your roof."

KI: The hospital roof?

Beth: Yes, it was in the utility room. That was the old hospital. So I quick called the operator. That's who you called, you know. Alvin Weeks was keeping the books then and I called him. He

was, I guess, the manager, you would say. They had a voluntary fire department, then, you know, and they came. Mr. Weeks had run from his place, down on First East, First South and First East. It was winter, and he had run all the way up to the hospital. He just had a light jacket on.

I didn't really panic, but there was a fire, you know, in the roof of the hospital. But I had a huge man, in a body cast, upstairs. I had strapped him on the gurney, and there was just I and the aide there. You just had one aide at night. We had strapped him on the gurney, and then, of course, people had started to gather, so I called somebody in to help us, because I knew we couldn't hold him comin' down that ramp. Of course, I was thinking of how I could get everybody out. But, it was frightening.

KI: I'm sure. What kind of cases did you see the most of? Was it maternity or something else?

Beth: Well, we had a lot of maternity cases, but a lot of injuries, you know, with the oil field.

KI: Dr. Seager told me that safety practices now are so much better than they were back in the forties. He practiced industrial medicine, and he said you would see the most horrible industrial accidents because people weren't trained in safety. So, you'd see a lot of that, too, huh?

Beth: Well, yes, and, you know, we didn't have ambulances. I can remember one came in in the back seat of a two-door car with a fractured femur, and it compounded, you know, the bone sticking out.

[We saw] burns. We got burns off the oil rigs. I can remember one particular one that the rig burned, and they went into the mud pit, under the rig, and, then this one fella tried to pull the other one out. Both of them were burned Every time the mud on his hands would slip, he slipped back in the pit. The other man was burned quite badly, and we had him.

I can remember one case of polio we had.

KI: Just one?

Beth: We had a lot of polio when I was in training. But I can only remember one, and it was a Dudley boy that we had. As soon as they diagnosed it as polio, we shipped him out.

KI: They would have had to quarantine otherwise, I imagine.

Beth: Yes. Well, we had him isolated. I can remember we had a little premie baby, and I can't remember really how much it weighed when it was born, but we put it in a little box in the doctor's dressing room and put oxygen through a little funnel to it, and a light on it to keep it warm. And she lived! It was Vicky Bullock [Garcia]. But I look at her now, and I'm just amazed that she made it, you know, because she was so primitively taken care of. [It was] all we had, you know.

I can remember delivering twins. This was in the old hospital, and it was in the noon hour time. The doctors were all out of their offices, and the lady was from Artesia. So, the aide and I got her in and we delivered a little boy. We were waiting for the afterbirth, and the aide said, "There's another baby here!" as I was taking care of the [first] one.

And, so, we had another little boy. So finally, we sent out to find a doctor, had everybody

looking. Finally, Dr. Spendlove come up, and I said, “Where’ve you been? We’ve had twins while you were getting here!” He went over to the basket, and looked, and he says, “Well, you sure have.” But I just think, what if one had been breech, you know? I delivered about six babies.

KI: Did you enjoy that?

Beth: Well, it didn’t bother me that much, you know, because I’d helped with so many, but you always wished you’d got the doctor there, because they were kind of unhappy, but sometimes you had no choice.

I can remember, literally, picking up [a woman], and I remember who she was. It was Howard Calder’s wife. She came in in labor and wanted to go to the bathroom, and I knew she was just ready to deliver. So, I bodily picked her up and took her in, and we delivered her on the table. After that, every time Howard saw me he said, “There’s the strongest woman in the world,” because she was as large as I was, but, you know, adrenaline.

KI: Adrenaline will do a lot, won’t it?

Beth: Yes. I can remember another one. It wasn’t in the old hospital. It was in the second hospital, and that was Mrs. Boyd Hatch. Instead of coming in the back entrance, she was trying to climb those stairs, and I literally had to pick her up and carry her in.

KI: No wheelchairs?

Beth: Well, the stairs.

KI: And no ramp?

Beth: No ramp.

KI: No elevator?

Beth: No, not then.

KI: These are the outside stairs or inside stairs?

Beth: Outside stairs.

KI: Okay. I understand.

Beth: Yeah, the outside stairs. See, she came in the front way.

Then, it was Christmas Eve one time, and a lady come running in the back door and said, “A man’s gonna shoot my husband! A man’s gonna shoot my husband!” So, I went out on the step, and there was the man pointing the gun. I thought, “I’ve got three kids. Do I want to go out there?”

But, anyhow, then he shot. I told one of the girls to call the officers as I went out there,

and then the guy came in, and I put my arm around him. I could feel the bullet under his skin, in the back, and so I got him in a wheelchair and called the doctor, Seager. I said, "Dr. Seager, I have a man here that's been shot, and the bullet's in the back." And he says, "How do you know?" And I says, "Because I can feel it!" So, he come up. I was supposed to go off at 11:00, but then, I was the only one that helped in surgery. I was on call for about fifteen years.

KI: Fifteen?

Beth: For surgery. So I stayed, you know, and got home really late Christmas Eve. But I can remember that's when it was.

KI: Did they catch the guy that did the shooting?

Beth: Yeah. He was there. Actually, he was mentally disturbed. And it was over a little bill of some kind.

KI: Nothing worth shooting anybody over, I'm sure.

Beth: No.

KI: So, you had three children during this time? Do you have more than three?

Beth: I have four.

KI: Was it hard for you, socially, culturally, within Ashley Valley, to be a working mother, at that time?

Beth: Well, there were quite a few. Of course, there were a lot of teachers and things like that. I belonged to PTAs and clubs and did church work, and I look back now and I wonder how I did it.

We had quite a few car accidents. I can remember, particularly, one person that came in that was just completely scalped. There was a couple and there were two women and two children in a car coming in, and they had a head-on, out east of town somewhere. Then the two women's husbands were following in a car. They came in and one woman was killed, and one child was killed. The one woman was just broken up real badly, and they sent her on to Salt Lake in the ambulance.

KI: Is that how they used to send them on? Like, this boy with polio, when you said they sent him to Salt Lake, did an ambulance come from Salt Lake and pick him up?

Beth: No, they sent him in a car. Most of them went out in station wagons or something like that.

KI: Just private cars?

Beth: Yes, until we got the ambulance, and I can't remember exactly when that was, but I'm sure

it was after 1950, you know, when they got the new hospital.

KI: What happened to this lady that was broken all up?

Beth: She died, and the fellow that had the head-on, we tried to help him, and he died on the operating table.

KI: That must be tough. Is it emotionally difficult to go home and separate yourself from your work?

Beth: Well, yeah, it's hard. You know, you have to get used to it, but, I don't know, I think you, really, develop kind of an insensitivity to it. At the time, you're so busy, you're trying to help, and you're just busy. Then, of course, especially with children, it haunts you afterwards, or it did me. I don't know whether everybody reacts like that, but it was sure hard to lose kids.

KI: I believe that. How long did you work as a nurse?

Beth: Well, in 1968 I about had teenagers. After my third child, I'd gone back to the hospital. I worked for Dr. Seager and Spendlove for seven years, and, then I worked for Dr. [R. Bruce] Christian for four years, and that's when I had my fourth child. Then he had a brain tumor and quit practice, so I went back to the hospital.

But I was beginning to get teenagers, and hours were terrible. My husband worked shifts, too, and there was one Christmas morning that we both had to work, and, I thought, that was it. So, one of the county commissioners asked me if I'd be interested in supervising school food, so I did that for six years. I had the opportunity of being the state president and got to travel a lot, I was in Washington, D.C.

KI: With school foods?

Beth: Yes. I was on a child feeding legislative council and went back there one March, on the legislative council. The next August we went back to the national convention and that was when President Nixon resigned, so we went down to the White House, and, of course, security wasn't anything like it is now. But we went down to the White House and watched him leave and saw he and one daughter and his wife get in the helicopter, and we saw luggage go out.

Then they started to swear Ford in, in the Rose Garden, and it started to rain. So, I thought, "Oh! I'm going to get to see a president sworn in." But it started to rain, and so they took it inside.

KI: Too bad. That was kind of exciting for that to happen all of a sudden like that.

Beth: Yes. That evening, in the motel, they told us not to go downtown, so we watched it on the television. They were burning him in effigy, and it was really quite bad, but the next morning it was real solemn, almost like a funeral, you know. There was very few people around. I was surprised.

KI: So, you did school foods for six years, and then what did you do?

Beth: With that I got to travel quite a bit. We went to quite a few conventions: New Orleans, and Minneapolis, and Albuquerque. Then they started the licensed practical nursing program in Roosevelt, and I was asked to teach that. It was kind of scary. I really enjoyed the school foods supervision, but I kind of got tired of ordering beans and corn, and things like that. But I worked with some wonderful people.

KI: When you were doing the school foods, did you make any major changes in diets or the kinds of foods that were served?

Beth: Well, I took Lola Christiansen's place, and she had been in there since the beginning. It was really her child. She had no children. It was so sad because she didn't want to retire, and it was real sad. But I made the menus for the whole district, and we fed about, oh, five thousand a day, something like that. We put in a new kitchen at Todd and a new kitchen in the Middle School. At that time you worked with the architects and people like that. So, that was very interesting. You did all the buying. That was really something because I was used to buying hamburger by the pound, and then you buy it by the ton. But I sure worked with a lot of good people, and I truly, really enjoyed that experience.

Then they asked me to teach, and, actually, I had no teaching experience. But, well, they were limited, I'm sure they were limited, in the applicants. They had some with higher degrees and that, but they had no experience. So, I got to negotiate my wage, and so for ten years I worked with the students. I really enjoyed that.

KI: When you were working in the hospitals over here, when you first came here, everybody was a registered nurse? Is that true?

Beth: Yes.

KI: When did the LPNs start coming in?

Beth: Well, the LPNs started after we moved into the other hospital, and of course, the ones we had, well, they 'granddaddied' some of them, you know, some of the aides that had worked a long time. They tested them and then gave them a license, but I don't know exactly when the law came in on that. The only LPNs we would have would be somebody that would come in, you know. So they decided to start this, over here, and then Jean Smith, she was from Salt Lake, came out and started the program.

KI: Would this have been the forerunner for the Uintah Basin Applied Technology Center?

Beth: Yes.

KI: Because it had a different name, didn't it?

Beth: Yes, Uintah Basin Area Vocational Center was what it was called then. At first, we were in

an old move-in building, there by the high school. Then they got the new building and we moved into that, and it was so nice. At first we had to take anybody that applied, and that first couple of years, that was hard years. I ate, slept with a book.

KI: Until you got your curriculum down?

Beth: Yes. That was, I believe, the hardest work I've ever done to do that, to get it started. After we got it started, it was real good. Then we used both the hospitals for clinical work.

KI: Did you also start testing people so that you could filter out students?

Beth: Yes. Then we got more applicants, you know, and they let us be more selective in who we got. It was really interesting because the students were there. We had from, oh, I think it was about twelve finish in the first group, up to fifteen or so as we went. Then they took larger classes after that. But then, we could have exams to filter out those.

Due to the facilities in both hospitals, we could only take so many because we could only work the day shifts, and that made it hard for the hospital staffing, if they had to move their people around so much.

KI: After you get an LPN, can you get an RN?

Beth: Yes.

KI: So did you have very many of your students go on for RNs?

Beth: Yes, we did. We really did, and, as a matter of fact, a lot of them went on and got their BS, and there was quite a few of them went on and got their Masters.

KI: Well, that's good work from you.

Beth: Actually, the state told us we over-taught the first two or three years.

KI: That's hard to believe, that you can over-teach people.

Beth: Well, I guess, that's what I thought. But, then again, they said we were teaching them more than legally they were supposed to do.

KI: Oh, it's kind of like what happened to you. Maybe you didn't want to frustrate them, once they got on the job, by knowing that they could do something and not being able to do it.

Beth: Yeah. But, then, finally, they started letting them do more, you know, like IVs, and things like that. It was just like the process of nurses and doctors, you know, and more, I think, at one time. They just thought women weren't capable of doing a lot of things. I think it was part of the process. I was there ten years, and the last three, four years, we started getting male students.



KI: I know of plenty of male nurses now.

Beth: Yes. The last two or three times I've been in the hospital, I've had male nurses in intensive care, almost completely. But, then again, that's kind of a reflection on women, I think.

KI: When did you retire?

Beth: 1985.

KI: What have you done since then? Are you still a member of any clubs or anything?

Beth: Yes. I've been a member of the Progressive Arts Club almost fifty years. I've got four children, three girls and a boy, and they all live on the Wasatch Front. My youngest daughter was born when I was thirty-eight, and she had hemangiomas [blood tumors] on her left leg, and, so, she had to have it removed when she was eighteen. That was a real hard thing. But she's done remarkably well since.

KI: What other kinds of things do you like to do? Do you travel?

Beth: Yes. We both retired at the same time. He [Tex Sweatfield, her husband] worked for Chevron, and in the oil. I retired in June and he retired in August, then we bought a fifth wheel and we went to Mexico through a couple of years, and to Arizona quite a few times with a group of friends.

We had a cabin on the mountain. Lightning struck it in '82 and burnt it down, and so we built another cabin back up there, in our spare time. We started it before we retired, and it took us about two, three years to get it built back. It still isn't completely finished.

But, then we went to Arizona with friends, and we took a cruise in the Caribbean. We happened to be in Florida when the space shuttle blew up. We saw that.

KI: That was an awful thing, wasn't it?

Beth: It was a terrible thing. We were at the Epcot Center when that happened.

KI: Was it very visible?

Beth: Yes. We had gone to the Epcot Center the day before, and then the day that it blew up, it was so cold. I just got chilled and had a terrible sore throat, so I stayed at the hotel with one of the other ladies. She had slipped and broken her wrist, and she was miserable. We stayed in the hotel, and we were about on the fourteenth floor, and we went on the balcony and just saw it so plain, clear across.

KI: It was at Cape Canaveral?

Beth: Yes, and we were at Orlando. That was what? Eighty-five miles, or something, away.

KI: You've had some very interesting experiences in your life, haven't you?

Beth: Well, yes. They've kind of been bad, haven't they?

KI: Some of them. I'm sure there are others that are very precious to you, though.

Beth: Yeah. I enjoyed that. [Tex] didn't like to travel like I do, but we enjoyed it. We always went south with a group of friends.

End

(Addition to Beth Sweatfield History, not on tape)

One day, as Beth walked out of Dr. Seager's office on Main Street to go home, she saw a young man slumped over his bike at the Cobble Rock Service Station. She watched him for a few minutes and thought he looked very odd, so she went over to see what was wrong. The boy had been sniffing gasoline and appeared to be dead. About that time, Dr. Seager walked out of the office, on his way home. Beth called to him to go check on the boy. Dr. Seager walked over, lifted the boy's head by the hair, and said, "Yes, he's dead." Then he dropped his head, turned and walked away.